IN THE CLAIMS

The following lists the claims now present in this application by reason of this amendment. This list supersedes and replaces all prior listings of the claims:

Claims 1-18 (canceled).

19. (Previously presented) A memory card for storing data transmitted from an external apparatus, said memory card comprising:

a flash memory for storing said data transmitted from said external apparatus;

a switch manually settable by a user to a state which inhibits writing data into said flash memory;

an interface for transmitting data to and receiving data from said external apparatus; and

control means for controlling said memory card in accordance with an instruction transmitted from said external apparatus, said control means sending to said external apparatus via said interface the state of said switch in response to a read status instruction transmitted thereto via said interface from said external apparatus and said control means receiving from said external apparatus data to be written to said flash memory and a write instruction signal only if the state of said switch that is sent to said external apparatus is not said state which inhibits writing.

20. (Previously presented) A memory card as claimed in claim 19, wherein said interface includes nine connectors at least one of which transmits and receives data.

21. (Previously presented) A memory card as claimed in claim 19, wherein said data is received from and transmitted to said external apparatus in serial form.

22. (Previously presented) A system comprising a memory card and an external apparatus, wherein data is communicated therebetween,

said memory card comprising:

a flash memory for storing said data transmitted from said external apparatus;

a switch manually settable by a user to a state which inhibits writing data into said flash memory;

an interface for transmitting data to and receiving data from said external apparatus; and

control means for controlling said memory card in accordance with an instruction transmitted from said external apparatus, said control means sending to said external apparatus via said interface the state of said switch in response to a read status instruction transmitted thereto via said interface from said external apparatus and said control means responding to a write instruction received from said external apparatus via said interface to write into said flash memory data received from said external apparatus;

and said external apparatus comprising:

a controller for writing data to or erasing data from the flash memory of said memory card, said controller transmitting a read status instruction to said memory card via said interface to determine whether a data writing operation to the flash memory of said memory card in inhibited and said controller transmitting via said interface said write instruction and said data to be written into said flash memory after said external apparatus receives said state of said switch and only if said state is not the state that inhibits writing.

23. (Previously presented) A system as claimed in claim 22, wherein said interface includes nine connectors at least one of which transmits and receives data.

24. (Previously presented) A system as claimed in claim 22, wherein said data is received from and transmitted to said external apparatus in serial form.

25. (New) A memory card for storing data transmitted from a control apparatus, comprising:

storage means for storing data transmitted from said control apparatus;

a switch for determining whether to disable writing of data to said storage means; and

control means for performing a predetermined control operation in accordance with a command transmitted from said control apparatus, said control means having a register for holding contents indicative of whether said switch is set or not set to a write-disabled status, said control means responding to a switch status read command issued from said control apparatus before a data write command is issued from said control apparatus to transmit the contents of said register to said control apparatus, such that:

if said switch is set to the write-disabled status, data to be written to said storage means are not transferred from said control apparatus but write-disable processing is executed by said control means; and

if said switch is not set to the write-disabled status, data to be written to said storage means are transmitted from said control apparatus, a command for writing said data to said storage means is received from said control apparatus, and processing for writing said data to said storage means is executed by said control means.

26. (New) The memory card according to claim 25 wherein, in accordance with said switch status read command issued from said control apparatus, said control means determines

the status of said switch and, if said switch is set to the write-disabled status, contents indicative of the write-disabled status are set to the register and, if said switch is not set to the write-disabled status, contents indicative of non-write-enabled status are set to the register.

27. (New) The memory card according to claim 25, wherein said switch status read command is issued from said control apparatus before starting the recording of a file from said control apparatus to said memory card; and,

if the status of said switch is not set to the write-disabled status as a result of the determination by said control means, the data transmitted from said control apparatus are written to said storage means, and if there are data to be continuously written, said data to be continuously written are transmitted from said control apparatus without further determination of the status of said switch.

28. (New) The memory card according to claim 25, wherein said switch status read command is issued from said control apparatus for each file to be written to said storage means.

29. (New) A control apparatus for at least writing data to a memory card of the type having a switch; comprising:

storage means for storing data to be transmitted to said memory card; and

control means for controlling at least the writing of data to said memory card;

said control means including:

issuing means for issuing a status read command for checking said memory card for the status of said switch before issuing a write command for writing data to said memory card;

receiving means for receiving contents transmitted from said memory card indicative of the status of said switch;

determining means for determining, on the basis of the received contents, whether the writing of data to said memory card is disabled; and

transmitting means for executing write-disabling processing without transmitting data to be written to storage means of said memory card if said switch is set to a write-disabled status, and for transmitting data to be written to said storage means of said memory card and for transmitting a command for writing said data to said storage means of said memory card if said switch is not set to the write-disabled status.

30. (New) The control apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the reading of the data to be transmitted to said memory card is discontinued if said switch is set to the write-disabled status.

31. (New) The control apparatus according to claim 29, wherein said status read command is issued before starting the recording of a file and, if said switch is not set to the write-disabled status, data to be written to said storage means of said memory card are transmitted; and if there are data to be continuously written, said data to be continuously written are transmitted to said memory card without checking the status of said switch.

32. (New) The control apparatus according to claim 29, wherein said status read command is issued for each file to be written to said memory card.

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33. (New) A data transmitting/receiving system for transmitting/receiving data between a memory card and a control apparatus on which said memory card is loaded,

said memory card comprising storage means for storing data transmitted from said control apparatus, a switch for determining whether to disable writing data to said storage means, and control means for performing a predetermined control operation in accordance with a command transmitted from said control apparatus;

said control means of said memory card having a register for holding switch status contents indicative of whether said switch is set or not set to a write-disabled status, said control means responding to a status read command issued from said control apparatus before a data write command is issued to transmit the contents of said register to said control apparatus, such that if said switch is set to the write-disabled status, said control means executes write-disable processing, whereby data to be written to said storage means is not transmitted from said control apparatus, and if said switch is not set to the write-disabled status, data to be written to said storage means and a write command for writing said data to said storage means are received from said control apparatus and said control means executes processing for writing said data to said storage means; and

said control apparatus comprising storage means for storing data to be transmitted to said memory card and control means for controlling at least the writing of data to said memory card,

said control means of said control apparatus issuing said status read command for checking the status of said switch before issuing said write command, receiving from said memory card said switch status contents, determining on the basis of the received contents whether the writing of data to said memory card is disabled, executing write-disabling processing without transmitting data to said memory card if said switch is set to a write-disabled status, and

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transmitting data to be written to said storage means of said memory card and transmitting said write command if said switch is not set to the write disabled status.

34. (New) The data transmitting/receiving system according to claim 33, wherein said control means of said memory card determines the status of said switch in response to said status read command issued from said control apparatus, and if the status of said switch is set to the write-disabled status, sets the switch status contents indicative of the write-disabled status to said register, and if the status of said switch is not set to the write-disabled status, sets the switch status contents indicative of the non-write-disabled status to said register.

35. (New) The data transmitting/receiving system according to claim 33, wherein said control means of said apparatus discontinues reading data to be transmitted to said memory card and stored in the storage means of said control apparatus if said switch is set to the write-disabled status.

36. (New) The data transmitting/receiving system according to claim 33, wherein said control means of said control apparatus issues said status read command before starting the recording of a file and, if said switch is not set to the write-disabled status, data to be written to said storage means of the memory card are transmitted, and if there are data to be continuously written, said data to be continuously written are transmitted to said memory card without checking the status of said switch.

37. (New) The data transmitting/receiving system according to claim 33, wherein said status read command is issued by said control means of said control apparatus for each file to be written to said memory card.

38. (New) A memory card for storing data transmitted from a control apparatus, comprising:

storage means for storing data transmitted from said control apparatus;

a switch for determining whether to disable writing data to said storage means; and

control means for performing a predetermined control operation in accordance with a command transmitted from said control apparatus, said control means having a register for holding contents indicative of whether said switch is set or not set to a write-disabled status, said control means responding to a switch status read command issued from said control apparatus before an erase command for erasing data is issued from said control apparatus to transmit the contents of said register to said control apparatus, such that:

if said switch is set to the write-disabled status, said control means executes data erase disable processing and said control apparatus does not transmit an erase command for erasing data, and

if said switch is not set to the write disabled state, said control apparatus transmits said erase command.

39. (New) The memory card according to claim 38 wherein, in accordance with said switch status read command issued from said control apparatus, said control means determines the status of said switch and, if said switch is set to the disabled status, contents indicative of the

write-disabled status are set to the register and, if said switch is not set to the write-disabled status, contents indicative of non-write-disabled status are set to the register.

40. (New) The memory card according to claim 38, wherein said switch status read command is issued from said control apparatus before starting the erasure of a file from said storage means and,

if the status of said switch is not set to the write-disabled status, data are erased from said storage means and, if there are data to be continuously erased, said data to be continuously erased are erased from said storage means without checking the status of said switch.

41. (New) The memory card according to claim 38, wherein said switch status read command is issued every time a file stored in said storage means is erased.

42. (New) A control apparatus for at least writing data to a memory card of the type having a switch, comprising:

storage means for storing data to be transmitted to said memory card; and

control means for controlling at least the writing of data to said memory card;

said control means including:

issuing means for issuing a status read command for checking the status of said switch before issuing a write command to write data to said memory card;

receiving means for receiving contents transmitted from said memory card indicative of the status of said switch;

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determining means for determining, on the basis of said received contents, whether the writing of data to said memory card is disabled; and,

transmitting means for executing data erase disable processing without transmitting an erase command for erasing data if said switch is set to a write-disabled status, and for transmitting said erase command if said switch is not set to the write-disabled status.

43. (New) The control apparatus according to claim 42, wherein said status read command is issued before starting the recording of a file to said memory card, and if said switch is not set to the write-disabled status, said erase command is issued to said memory card, and if there are data to be continuously erased, an erase command for erasing said data to be continuously erased is issued to said memory card without checking the status of said switch.

44. (New) The control apparatus according to claim 42, wherein said status read command is issued every time a file stored in said storage means of said memory card is erased.

45. (New) A data transmitting/receiving system for transmitting/receiving data between a memory card and a control apparatus on which said memory card is loaded,

said memory card comprising storage means for storing data transmitted from said control apparatus, a switch for determining whether to disable writing data to said storage means, and control means for performing a predetermined control operation in accordance with a command transmitted from said control apparatus,

said control means of said memory card having a register holding switch status contents indicative of whether said switch is set or not set to a write-disabled status, said control

means responding to a switch status read command issued from said control apparatus before an erase command for erasing data is issued from said control apparatus to transmit the contents of said register to said control apparatus, such that:

if said switch is set to the write-disabled status, said control means executes data erase processing and said control apparatus does not transmit an erase command for erasing data, and if said switch is not set to the write-disabled status, said control apparatus transmits said erase command; and

said control apparatus comprising storage means for storing data to be transmitted to said memory card and control means for controlling at least the writing of data to said memory card,

said control means of said control apparatus issuing to said memory card said status read command for checking the status of said switch before issuing a write command for writing data to said memory card, receiving said switch status contents transmitted from said memory card, determining on the basis of the received contents whether the writing of data to said memory card is disabled, and executing data erase disable processing without transmitting an erase command if said switch is set to the write-disabled status, transmitting said erase command for erasing data if said switch is not set to the write-disabled status.

46. (New) The data transmitting/receiving system according to claim 45, wherein said control means of said memory card determines the status of said switch in response to said switch status read command issued from said control apparatus, and if the status of said switch is set to the write-disabled status, sets said switch status contents indicative of the write-disabled status to said register, and if the status of said switch is not set to the write-disabled status, sets said switch status contents indicative of non-write-disabled status to said register.

47. (New) The data transmitting/receiving system according to claim 45, wherein said control means of said control apparatus issues said status read command before starting the recording of a file to said memory card, and if said switch is not set to the write-disabled status, issues said erase command to said memory card for erasing said data, and if there are data to be continuously erased, issues said erase command for erasing said data to be continuously erased to said memory card without checking the status of said switch.

48. (New) The data transmitting/receiving system according to claim 45, wherein said status read command is issued by said control means of said control apparatus every time a file stored in said storage means of said memory card is to be erased.